

Town of Groton, Connecticut
Meeting Minutes
Town Council Public Safety Committee
(2015)

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex – Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Rich Moravsik, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present at the meeting were Public Safety Committee members Councilor Rich Moravsik, Chair, Councilor Joe de la Cruz, and Councilor Harry Watson.

Absent – Councilor Dean Antipas.

Chairman Moravsik declared a quorum.

Also present were Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilor Bob Frink, Town of Groton Ken Richards III, President , Ronald Yuhas Vice President, Board Member Alan Ackley, Poquonnock Bridge Fire District Board of Directors;

Fire Chief Joseph Winski, Deputy Fire Chief Timothy M. Driscoll, Poquonnock Fire Department;

Fire Chief Ken Richards II, Old Mystic Fire Department;

Christopher M. Clarkin, President, Maria Wilson, Treasurer, Mystic River Ambulance;

George ‘Tim’ Law, President Groton Ambulance Association Inc.

3. CALENDAR & COMMUNICATIONS

A Letter was sent to the Committee via Mayor Schmidt, from Fire Chief/Marshall Frank C. Hilbert, Mystic Fire District, concerning the duties and responsibilities of the Fire Marshall. Also an e-mail was received earlier this month from Fire Chief Ken Richards, II, Old Mystic Fire Department, - The Chairman indicated that the proposed positions would be required to handle the future work load of the Town Buildings and Schools. No action was at this time.

Meeting Minutes; A motion was made by Councilor Joe de la Cruz to accept the minutes, seconded by Councilor Harry Watson, The motion passed.

4. NEW BUSINESS

2015-0052 Poquonnock Bridge Fire District Issues

Chairman Moravsik indicated that as a result of last month’s Public Safety Meeting comments concerning the decline in the service level of ambulance, and, the comments made at the Groton Fire Officer’s monthly meeting, a preliminary review of the level of ambulance service being provided, was conducted, by the Chairman, that gathered information from the Emergency Management Dispatch Office, data collected by the Poquonnock Bridge Fire Department, since it effects the Districts operation. The information collected resulted in setting up meetings with the Town Manager, Mark Oefinger

On July 2nd, the first meeting was called with the Mark Oefinger, Town Manager, and Joe Satre, Manager of Emergency Services, Town of Groton and the Chairman of Public Safety Committee. The purpose of that meeting was to relay certain facts pertaining to the level of service Groton Ambulance Association (GAA) was providing, and to verify the data in hand. Since the data was correct, On July 9th, the second meeting with the Town Manager, Manager

of Emergency Service, and the President of Groton Ambulance Association, was called. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the level of service or lack of service being provided, and to see if improvement was planned. It was noted that during the past, no service was provide on seven (7) Sundays, and during the last week in June GAA did not respond to 5 calls. It was also noted that during 2014, some 321 calls went to mutual aid, and as of June 15th, some 230 calls went to mutual aid. Other issues were discussed, such as shift staffing, periderm employees and full time employees, the lack of Emergency Medical Service Plan agreement, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Charter and/or By-Laws, Audit, Members of the Board of Directors, Monthly/Annual Meeting Minutes. As a result of the items discussed and information obtained, the Chairman informed GAA that he will personally review the level of service being provided by GAA for forty-five (45) days, observe any improvements, monitor the calls, and report the findings to the Public Safety Committee. The Chairman also asked GAA if there is anything the Town could do to help outside of funds. The review period is from July 9th to August 23rd. Copies of the following documents requested were to be submitted also by that date.

1. Charter/By-Laws
2. Standard Operating Procedures, (SOP)
3. Latest Audit Report filed with the State
4. Minutes of the Annual Report, and any monthly reports
5. Employee guielines
6. List of GAA Board Members, and positions help
7. Weekly Schedules during this review period

The Chairman opened the floor for comments:

Tim Law, President, GAA, indicated that he felt that GAA was being singled out, and wondered why Mystic River Ambulance, (MRA) was not be review. The Chairman stated todote the Public Safety Committee has not received any concerns about MRA, during this same time period (May to July 2015). Tim Law went on to explain the high percentages of service GAA has performed during

previous years, and that he felt GAA exceeded the State of Connecticut standards. Fire Chief Winski questioned these percentages, and method in which they were arrived at. An example of a recent incident was discussed in which an individual required medical attention at a loading dock/platform. PBFD –R1, arrived at the scene, provided treatment, and waited for an ambulance to show up. None arrived, so the injured person drove himself/herself to L&M/ Pequot. GAA may have been on a call at that time, the dispatch records will clarify the issue.

Tim Law indicated that he does not have a signed agreement with the Town. And that the “Emergency Medical Service Plan”, (EMSP), agreement submitted by the Town in 2005 was not acceptable to GAA, for financial reasons. Also it was pointed out that MRA does not have an agreement with the Town.

Ronald Yuhas, question the financial status of GAA, and asked for an accounting of the revenue received. As he felt that GAA has sufficient funds to staff the shifts. Tim Law indicated that he has five (5) full time employees and the rest of the shift is made up of per dim employees. Tim Law stated that he would have financial problems if hired more full time employees and provide and increase of service, without additional funds from the town. Ken Richards III, attempted to calculate the possible expenditures based upon call volume. The Chairman passed a copy of this weeks GAA Shift Schedule to the participants, that shows approximately 24 open shifts not covered. Tim Law question where the sheet came from, and was displeased that the Chairman had the copy.

Other discussions were about medical insurance, billing, collecting, patient mix, State and Federal regulations. Fire Chief Ken Richards II, stated that there is a Bill on the CT Rep. Floor, that needs to be stopped, as it will affect the amount of funds an ambulance provider can collect per call, under a specific medical plan. An example given stated that at present some \$500 dollars can be collected, if the Bill passes only about \$70 dollars can be collected under a specific plan. The Chairman, asked Fire Chief Ken Richards to put together a brief paper, and it will be forwarded to the Council for endorsement and then forwarded to our State Legislators for their action.

Councilor Bob Frink, attended the meeting for a brief time due to other commitments, but indicated his interest in this issue as it effects the safety of the community as well as any future development.

It appears that the ambulance companies are operating under pre-2002 statues, which were recently updated in January 2014. The Chairman asked that Connecticut State Statues be tabled, as that was not on the agenda to deliberate the wording of the statues/regulations.

Councilor Harry Watson question the level of service provide and was surprised at the current findings, and looks for all here to work together for a solution to insure that health and welfare of our residents in Groton does not decrease.

Mayor Schmidt, was glad to see and hear the discussions taking place, and the interest in the subject with the people present at the meeting. She mention and incident that led her to become aware of the situation, and looks for positive results in the future.

Councilor de la Cruz, stated that he has a personal interest in this matter, since he is on a campaign to make the residents aware of the drug problem, and the medical help associated with it. An ambulance delay is unacceptable.

Ken Richards III, felt that a possible solution would be for GAA & MRA to assist one another by having members join both groups. Pro's and Con's were discussed, and the idea is still on the table.

Maria Wilson, suggested that the committee seek assistance from the DHS to obtain, examples of a typical EMSP, and that she has a contact person that MRA deals with. The Chairman, indicated that Joe Satre is already looking into the matter with the Local DHS person in Norwich.

A motion was made by Councilor Joe de la Cruz, Seconded by Councilor Harry Watson. The meeting closed at 8:13 p.m.

The next Public Service Safety meeting is August 19th, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in CR1 Tall Hall Annex Bldg.

Submitted:

Councilor Rich Moravsik, Chairman Safety Committee